

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 KABUL 0485

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AF
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN IN 1977: A YEAR-END INTERNAL POLITICAL
ASSESSMENT

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: IN MANY WAYS, 1977 WAS THE MOST
EVENTFUL YEAR SINCE THE 1973 COUP IN THE POLITICAL EVOLUTION
OF PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD'S REGIME. THE PRINCIPAL PILLARS OF
THE REPUBLIC'S POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS -- I.E., THE CON-
STITUTION AND THE CHARTER OF THE PARTY OF THE NATIONAL REVOLU-
TION (PNR) -- WERE PROMULGATED. IN ADDITION, SEVERAL KEY BODIES
WERE ESTABLISHED: THE HIGH COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES; THE
CENTRAL COUNCIL OF THE PNR; AND THE HIGH JUDICIARY COUNCIL.
THESE ORGANIZATIONS COULD POTENTIALLY REPRESENT THE CRUCIAL
LEVERS OF POLITICAL POWER IN THIS COUNTRY, AND THE FIRST
TWO ARE INTENDED, INTER ALIA, TO PLAY A ROLE IN A SMOOTH
EVENTUAL SUCCESSION TO DOUD. DOUD IS IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF
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THE NEW INSTITUTIONS AND IN CHARGE OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT.

2. 1977 WAS NOT A COMPLETE BED OF ROSES FOR THE GOVERNMENT,
HOWEVER, POLITICALLY AWARE AFGHANS ARE FAR FROM CONVINCED THAT
THE COUNTRY IS PROGRESSING AWAY FROM THE TRADITIONAL ONE-MAN
DESPOTIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT SO CHARACTERISTICS OF AFGHANIS-
TAN'S HISTORY. SIGNS OF POLITICAL DISSATISFACTION, DISSENSION

AND MALAISE WERE EVIDENT, ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING THE NAMING OF THE POST-CONSTITUTION CABINET ON MARCH 17, WHICH CONTAINED FEW NEW FACES. MOREOVER, DISCORD WAS ALSO DEMONSTRATED WHEN A CABINET CRISIS OCCURRED IN NOVEMBER, WHEREIN FIVE OR SIX MINISTERS SUBMITTED THEIR RESIGNATIONS, BUT EVENTUALLY WERE PERSUADED TO RETURN TO THEIR OFFICES. AS THE YEAR ENDED, RUMORS ABOUNDED THAT SOME PRESIDENTIAL RETALIATION AGAINST THESE MINISTERS WAS IN THE OFFING. REGARDLESS OF THESE MINISTERS' FATES, INCREASING EVIDENCE POINTS TO DAOUD'S RELIANCE ON ONLY A FEW CLOSE ADVISERS. THUS, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER HIS PUBLIC PLANS FOR BUILDING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND FOR BROADENING PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS CAN BE CARRIED FORWARD SUCCESSFULLY IN A SEEMINGLY CONTRADICTORY ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH HE CALLS ON FEWER AND FEWER MEN TO ASSIST HIM IN WIELDING POWER.

3. NEVERTHELESS, WE ANTICIPATE THAT 1978 WILL SEE THE LAYING OF FURTHER MILESTONES UNDER DOUD'S DIRECTION -- I.E., THE NAMING OF ONE OR MORE VICE PRESIDENTS, A SUPREME COURT, AND, PERHAPS, THE ADOPTION OF FURTHER LEGAL REFORMS -- AS THE REGIME MOVES TOWARD ITS SELF-PROCLAIMED NOVEMBER 22, 1979, DEADLINE WHEN AFGHANISTAN'S ELECTED PARLIAMENT (MELLI JIRGAH) WILL CONVENE, AND THE COUNTRY WILL BECOME, AT LEAST BY THE AFGHANS' CONSTITUTIONAL DEFINITION, A FULL-FLEDGED REPUBLIC. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE STATE OF DAOUD'S HEALTH, OF COURSE. AS 1977 ENDED, HE SEEMED NO REASONABLY FIT.

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4. UNITED STATES INTEREST IN THE MAINTENANCE OF REGIONAL STABILITY WILL CONTINUE TO BE MET IF, LIKE LAST YEAR, , 1978 IS FREE OF SERIOUS INTERNAL UNREST, AND THE REGIME CAN MOVE AHEAD WITH ITS POLITICAL-INSTITUTION BUILDING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. INTERNAL STABILITY WOULD ALSO PERMIT THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO CERTAIN AREAS OF PRIME IMPORTANCE TO THE U.S., SUCH AS NARCOTICS CONTROL AND HUMAN RIGHTS. WHILE DAOUD IS IN THE SADDLE, SERIOUS DOMESTIC TURMOIL IS NOT VISIBLE ON THE HORIZON, AND, ASSUMING HE STAYS IN POWER, U.S. INTERESTS IN AFGHANISTAN SHOULD ENDURE THE NEXT YEAR WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT EROSION, AND THEY COULD, IN FACT, ENJOY SOME ADVANCE, IF DAOUD'S STATE VISIT TO THE U.S. MATERIALIZES WITHOUT UNDUE DELAY. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

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5. THE REGIME'S PROGRAM: THE HIGHLIGHT OF AFGHANISTAN'S 1977 DOMESTIC POLITICAL EVENTS WAS THE CONVENING OF THE LOYA JIRGAH (NATIONAL CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY) ON JANUARY 30, AND THAT BODY'S ADOPTION OF A NEW NATIONAL CONSTITUTION AND ELECTION OF DAOUD AS FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC FOR A SIX-YEAR TERM. THE LOYA JIRGAH'S PROCEEDINGS DID, AS HAS BEEN TRADITIONALLY THE CASE FOR THIS UNIQUELY AFGHAN INSTITUTION, CONTAIN A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF GENUINE DEBATE OVER VARIOUS PROVISIONS IN DAOUD'S DRAFT CONSTITUTION, THUS ILLUSTRATING THAT THE EXPRESSION OF DISSENTING VIEWS -- WITHIN PRESCRIBED PARAMETERS -- IS NOT TOTALLY PROHIBITED IN AFGHANISTAN. THE CONSTITUTION, WHILE NOT A FULLY LIBERAL DOCUMENT, APPEARS MORE APPROPRIATE TO THIS COUNTRY'S CURRENT NEEDS THAN ITS 1964 PREDECESSOR, AND REPRESENTS THE PRINCIPAL FOUNDATION OF THIS REGIME'S OVERALL POLITICAL-SOCIAL REFORM PROGRAM.

6. A MAJOR PROVISION OF THE ADOPTED CONSTITUTION IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SINGLE LEGAL POLITICAL PARTY, THE PARTY OF THE NATIONAL REVOLUTION (PNR). A PARTY MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT DRIVE WAS APPARENTLY LAUNCHED SOON AFTER THE LOYA JIRGAH COMPLETED ITS WORK, BUT DAOUD SUSPENDED THIS CAMPAIGN IN APRIL, OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE "OPPORTUNISTS" AND "SUBVERSIVES" WERE AMONG THE RECRUITS. MATTERS WERE SUBSEQUENTLY SORTED OUT TO THE PRESIDENT'S SATISFACTION, AND HE PROCLAIMED THE PNR'S CHARTER IN JULY, A

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BLISHMENT OF A SINGLE LEGAL POLITICAL PARTY, THE PARTY OF THE NATIONAL REVOLUTION (PNR). A PARTY MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT DRIVE WAS APPARENTLY LAUNCHED SOON AFTER THE LOYA JIRGAH COMPLETED ITS WORK, BUT DAOUD SUSPENDED THIS CAMPAIGN IN APRIL, OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE "OPPORTUNISTS" AND "SUBVERSIVES" WERE AMONG THE RECRUITS. MATTERS WERE SUBSEQUENTLY SORTED OUT TO THE PRESIDENT'S SATISFACTION, AND HE PROCLAIMED THE PNR'S CHARTER IN JULY, A

DOCUMENT WHICH ESTABLISHES A ONE-PARTY POLITICAL SYSTEM NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THOSE EXTANT IN EASTERN EUROPE. A SECOND MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT DRIVE IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY, WITH THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF REPORTEDLY APPROVING EACH PROSPECTIVE MEMBER, BUT AT YEAR'S END THERE HAD BEEN NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING THE CREATION OF THE EXTENSIVE PARTY APPARATUS CALLED FOR IN THE CHARTER. WHETHER THE PNR WILL EVER PLAY A SIGNIFICANT AND INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ROLE IS NOT YET CLEAR, AS LONG AS DAOUD IS IN POWER, HE WILL PERSONALLY DETERMINE THE ROLE OF THE PARTY.

7. THE PARTY CHARTER STIPULATES THAT THE PNR CENTRAL COUNCIL WILL FUNCTION AS THE COUNTRY'S MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL BODY, ASIDE FROM THE PRESIDENT. FOUR MEN (MINISTER OF STATE ABDUL MAJID, MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE GENERAL GHULAM HAIDER RASULI, MINISTER OF FINANCE SYED ABDULILAH, AND MINISTER OF FRONTIER AFFAIRS ABDUL KAYUM) WERE APPOINTED TO THIS BODY ON NOVEMBER 6. THE PRESIDENT'S CHOICES IMMEDIATELY PRECIPITATED A CABINET CRISIS, AS FIVE OR SIX MINISTERS WHO WERE NOT NAMED TO THE CENTRAL COUNCIL, INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER WAHEED ABDULLAH, SUBMITTED THEIR RESIGNATIONS. THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR THESE MINISTERS' ACTION WAS UNDOUBTEDLY A FEAR THAT THEIR EXCLUSION CONSTITUTED A DEATH KNEEL FOR THEIR POTENTIAL INFLUENCE, AS INDIVIDUALS OR AS A GROUP, OVER AFGHANISTAN'S FUTURE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. GIVEN THE POWERS FORMALLY INVESTED IN THE CENTRAL COUNCIL IN CHOOSING DAOUD'S SUCCESSOR, THESE MINISTERS' CONFIDENTIAL

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FEARS MAY BE JUSTIFIED.

8. THE CREATION OF ANOTHER POTENTIALLY KEY POLITICAL BODY, A TWELVE-MEMBER HIGH COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES (HCAF), WAS ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 27, BUT ITS MEMBERSHIP HAS NOT BEEN DISCLOSED PUBLICLY. OUR INFORMATION INDICATES THE HCAF IS COMPOSED OF A MIXED BAG OF SENIOR OFFICERS (INCLUDING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE MINISTER AS CHAIRMAN) AND RELATIVELY JUNIOR OFFICERS, SOME OF WHOME WERE KEY PARTICIPANTS IN THE JULY 1973 COUP AND WHO SERVED ON THE NOW DEFUNCT CENTRAL COMMITTEE, THE SHADOWY ORGANIZATION WHICH "RULED" AFGHANISTAN FROM 1973 UNTIL FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR (REF: 77 KABUL 7700). THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HCAF ARE NOT YET APPARENT, BUT DAOUD SEEMS TO VIEW IT AS THE PRIMARY COORDINATING BODY BETWEEN THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP. THE HCAF COULD ALSO BE DESTINED TO FILL SOME SORT OF WATCHDOG ROLE AS WELL, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE MILITARY IN AFGHANISTAN IS THE ULTIMATE ARBITER OF WHO CONTROLS THIS COUNTRY. IN ANY CASE IT IS A MEANS OF KEEPING SOME FORMER CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS INVOLVED IN THE REGIME AND HENCE UNDER DAOUD'S WATCHFUL EYE.

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9. REFORM OF AFGHANISTAN'S LEGAL-JUDICIAL SYSTEM IS ALSO ONE OF THE REGIME'S IMPORTANT DOMESTIC POLITICAL GOALS, AND 1977 SAW SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON THIS FRONT -- WHICH IS OF KEY IMPORTANCE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE HIGH JUDICIARY COUNCIL, THE INTERIM SUPREME JUDICIAL BODY PRIOR TO THE CONSTITUTIONALLY REQUIRED APPOINTMENT OF A SUPREME COURT ON JUNE 22, 1978, WAS NAMED ON APRIL 11. NEW CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CODES ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED, AND A HIGH-LEVEL LEGAL SEMINAR HELD IN KABUL IN DECEMBER HINTED THAT FURTHER NEW LAWS COVERING ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURE MAY BE FORTHCOMING SOON. DAOUD, IN ADDRESSING THIS SEMINAR, EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE, AS WELL AS THE DIFFICULTY, OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF ANY LEGAL REFORM PROGRAM, AND CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT HE HAS INVESTED HIS OWN PERSONAL AND POLITICAL PRESTIGE IN THE ATTAINMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PROGRESS IN THIS CRUCIAL FIELD.

10. THUS, 1977 WAS EVENTFUL AS KEY ELEMENTS OF AFGHANISTAN'S
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NEW POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS WERE PROCLAIMED. SEVERAL ELEMENTS OF THIS INSTITUTION-BUILDING PROGRAM REMAIN OUTSTANDING -- E.G.,

THE APPOINTMENT OF ONE OR MORE VICE PRESIDENTS, THE CREATION OF A FUNCTIONING PARTY APPARATUS THROUGH-OUT THE COUNTRY, AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A SUPREME COURT. WE ANTICIPATE SEVERAL OF THESE WILL COME INTO BEING IN 1978, AS THE REGIME BUILDS ON 1977'S ACHIEVEMENTS.

11. SIGNS OF STRESS AND DISSENSION: THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MINI-EUPHORIA CREATED BY THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION, AND THE ABOLITION OF MARTIAL LAW AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 26, BEGAN WITH THE MARCH 17 ANNOUNCEMENT OF A NEW CABINET, WHICH CONTAINED FEW NEW FACES, AND RETURNED MOST OF THE INCUMBENTS TO THEIR FORMER POSITIONS. SINCE THAT DATE FEELINGS OF DISAPPOINTMENT AND IMPATIENCE HAVE BEEN WIDESPREAD AMONG MANY OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA, AS THIS GROUP PERCEIVED INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS IN THE GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

12. A COROLLARY OF THIS DISAPPOINTMENT HAS BEEN A WIDESPREAD FEELING IN MANY SEGMENTS OF THIS SOCIETY THAT A BREAKDOWN IN DOMESTIC SECURITY HAS OCCURRED, AND THAT VIOLENCE REMAINS A FACT OF AFGHAN POLITICAL LIFE. THE MURDER OF ARIANA PILOT INA'MUL HAQ GRAN, AN ACT BELIEVED BY MANY TO HAVE BEEN SANCTIONED, IF NOT CARRIED OUT, BY THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF, AND THE ASSASSINATION OF PLANNING MINISTER ALI AHMAD KHURRAM BY A MEMBER OF SOME SUSPECTED EXTREMIST GROUP, UNDERSCORE THE VIEW THAT "POLITICAL PARTICIPATION" IN AFGHANISTAN STILL INVOLVES THE RISK OF VIOLENCE. FOR ITS PART, THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN INCOGNIZANT OF THE LAW-AND-ORDER ISSUE. IN THE FALL IT MOUNTED A PRESS CAMPAIGN AIMED AT PUBLICIZING THE VIGILANCE AND SUCCESS OF THE POLICE AGAINST COUNTRYSIDE BANDITS, A DEVELOPMENT WHICH INDICATED THAT THE REGIME FELT COMPELLED TO REACT TO A PUBLIC MOOD, CONFIDENTIAL

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EVEN THOUGH IT HAS STILL NOT YET FELT EQUALLY CONSTRAINED TO DEAL OPENLY WITH THE GRAN KILLING.

13. THE NOVEMBER CABINET CRISIS CONSTITUTED THE YEAR'S MOST SPECTACULAR EXPRESSION OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL DISSENT, AND ALSO SERVED TO EMPHASIZE THE STRENGTH OF DAOUD'S CONTROL OVER THE AFGHAN POLITICAL MECHANISMS. THE PROTESTING MINISTERS OBVIOUSLY CONCLUDED THAT TWO OF THE FOUR APPOINTED TO THE CENTRAL PARTY COUNCIL -- MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE RASULI, AND FINANCE MINISTER ABDULILAH -- WERE EMERGING AS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND POWERFUL MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S INNER CIRCLE, AND THAT IT WAS THEN OR NEVER IF THE GROUP OF MINISTERS WANTED TO RETAIN FOR THEMSELVES SOME MODICUM OF INFLUENCE WITH DAOUD. IN SOME MANNER, HOWEVER, THE AFGHAN LEADER CONVINCED THE DISSIDENTS TO RETURN TO THEIR POSTS. NO APPARENT RETRIBUTION HAS SO FAR BEEN TAKEN, BUT AT YEAR'S END, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY RUMORS THAT THE DISSIDENT MINISTERS WILL SOON BE REPLACED OR "EXILED" TO AMBASSADOR-

SHIPS ABROAD. ON THE OTHER HAND, DAOUD MAY FEEL THAT HAVING TWO
COMPETING GROUPS IN HIS CABINET WILL ENHANCE HIS ABILITY TO
CONTROL BOTH FACTIONS. AS USUAL, HE KEEPS HIS OWN COUNSEL AND
BIDES HIS TIME BEFORE DEALING WITH POLITICAL AND PERSONNEL
MATTERS.

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14. THE CABINET INCIDENT INDICATES FURTHER THAT UNSWERVING
PERSONAL LOYALTY TO DAOUD IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTE
IN THE MAKE-UP OF AN AFGHAN OFFICIAL. THIS FACT OF POLITICAL
LIFE IS NOT LIKELY TO ELICIT INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP, STIMULATE
MUCH INITIATIVE IN SUBORDINATES, NOR, IN THE LONG RUN, ENHANCE
THE PROSPECT THAT THE VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS DAOUD IS STRIVING
TO BUILD WILL LONG SURVIVE HIS PASSING.

15. THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE ALSO HAS PRODUCED SOME STRESSES IN
THE BODY POLITIC. AN ONLY FAIR AGRICULTURAL YEAR HAS CAUSED
GRAIN SHORTAGES AND DRIVEN UP THE PRICE OF WHEAT IN URBAN
AREAS. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEVEN-YEAR PLAN HAS BEEN
SERIOUSLY LAGGING. THERE WERE POSITIVE SIGNS IN THE ECONOMY,
INCLUDING A FAVORABLE FOREIGN EXCHANGE SITUATION, BUT GOVERN-
MENTAL INEFFICIENCY IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE IS AN ISSUE AMONG THE
COMPETING GROUPS OF CABINET MINISTERS. AFGHANISTAN'S ECONOMIC
PROBLEMS ARE LONG-STANDING AND EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE,

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AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE MASSES OF AFGHANS ARE NOT HIGH, BUT LACK OF GREATER PROGRESS, ESPECIALLY IF COMBINED WITH ANOTHER BAD WHEAT HARVEST, COULD POST POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR THE REGIME.

16. THE YEAR TO COME: AS REPORTED IN LAST YEAR'S ASSESSMENT (77 KABUL 503), THE DAOUD REGIME, AFTER THREE AND ONE-HALF YEARS IN POWER, HAD SUCCESSFULLY ROUTED ALL ORGANIZED DOMESTIC OPPOSITION, HAD COWED THOSE MALCONTENTS WHO REMAINED, AND HAD BEGUN THE MORE PROLONGED PHASE OF CONSOLIDATING ITS OWN LEGITIMACY. MANY OF THE DEVELOPMENTS ONLY HINTED AT A YEAR AGO HAVE COME TO PASS IN 1977, AND DAOUD'S PROGRAM COULD INDEED BRING ABOUT THE BIRTH OF A WOBBLY-KNEED REPUBLIC IN NOVEMBER OF 1979.

17. SOME, MORE CYNICAL, OBSERVERS OF THE AFGHAN SCENE, HOWEVER, ASSERT THAT THE REGIME'S INSTITUTION-BUILDING AND REFORM PROGRAM AMOUNTS TO LITTLE MORE THAN A "POTEMKIN VILLAGE" TO SCREEN THE CONTINUED HOLD ON POWER BY DAOUD AND HIS POLITICAL HENCHMEN. WHILE WE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO DISMISS THIS VIEW OUTRIGHT, WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THE AFGHAN PRESIDENT IS COMMITTED TO MOVING THIS COUNTRY GRADUALLY TOWARD A MORE MULTI-FACETED POLITICAL SYSTEM WHICH WILL SURVIVE HIM, AND IN WHICH SOME CHECKS-AND-BALANCES MAY BE SHARED IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE AMONG THE MILITARY, THE PARTY APPARATUS, THE BUREAUCRACY, AND THE TRADITIONAL AFGHAN "ESTABLISHMENT" (THE MOHAMMADZAI CLAN, LARGER LANDOWNERS, TRIBAL LEADERS, WEALTHY MERCHANTS, KEY RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND VARIOUS INTELLIGENTSIA). AT THE SAME TIME, A TREND, APPARENTLY CONTRADICTORY TO THE REGIME'S PROFESSED INSTITUTION-BUILDING CAMPAIGN, MAY BE DEVELOPING, WHEREIN DAOUD CALLS FOR ADVICE MORE AND MORE FROM A LIMITED GROUP OF LOYALISTS. WE DOUBT THAT THESE TWO TACKS CAN BE PURSUED SIMULTANEOUSLY BY DAOUD.

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18. IN SUM, WE ANTICIPATE THAT 1978 WILL BE A YEAR OF CONTINUED BUILDING OF THE FORMAL STRUCTURE OF THE REGIME'S PROGRAM, MOST CERTAINLY ACCOMPANIED BY FURTHER GRUMBLING FROM SOME CIRCLES THAT STAGNATION IS RAMPANT AND DIRECTION ABSENT. THE KEY, OF COURSE, REMAINS THE SURVIVAL OF ONE 69 YEAR-OLD MAN, WHOSE HEALTH IS REPORTEDLY GOOD AND WHOSE ENERGIES APPEAR SUFFICIENTLY ROBUST. WHO OR WHAT MIGHT FOLLOW A SUDDEN DEPARTURE OF DAOUD IS A MATTER OF SPECULATION. BUT THIS UNCERTAINTY LENDS URGENCY TO

FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFGHAN RULER'S OVERALL POLITICAL-
INSTITUTION BUILDING PROGRAM, WHICH, IF SUCCESSFUL, COULD LIFT
THISCOUNTRY OUT OF BACKWARDNESS AND TOWARD A STATUSWHICH, IF
NOT REPRESENTING DEMOCRATIC NIRVANA, MIGHT AT LEAST CONSIST
LESS OF TRADITIONAL DESPOTISM, AND MORE OF AN EQUITABLE AND WIDER
SHARING OF POLITICAL POWER, AND, MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, WOULD
CONSTITUTE A SYSTEM PROVIDING FOR STABLE TRANSFERS OF POWER.
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